



# The Old Run

Journal of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society

No. 9

September 1960

## Burton Road.

Following a request by Dr. Youell after purchase of the line by Clayton's, the Highways Dept. have now removed the tarmac covering the rails at the Burton Road level crossing. Traffic could, if the track were rekeyed, now go right to Whitaker's.

## Reprint.

In the very near future the Middleton Railway booklet (retail price 1/-) is to be printed as a second edition, with amendments. Will anyone with information which may be of use in the second edition please contact either the Editor or Secretary of the Society.

## Swumbles Car.

Following a recent mishap with loco 1697 and Swumbles no. 2, several of the timbers of the latter have been found to be in need of replacement: work is now proceeding in replacing these - much of the decayed wood has been removed.

## Chairs.

We pass over in pained silence the comment of some humorist that on a line as old as the Middleton, we should look for Sedan chairs! We have practically everything else, however, and the line is a Railway museum in itself.

The original stone chair/sleepers are still visible as components of stone walls at the Hunslet Moor staiths, but are no longer acting in their original capacity. The oldest date on a chair is 1886, although rust has no doubt made illegible earlier dates than this. We have every conceivable type of chair - square, oval or oblong base, two, three or four holes, spike and coach screw fitting, pregrouping, grouping and (a few) post-grouping.

For no logical reason, L. & S. W. R. chairs seem in the majority but Midland, G. N., L. M. S., L. N. E. are plentiful. S. E. & C. seem a long way from home, but L. & Y. (several types) are no doubt local cast-offs. Chairs are about the most durable of permanent way. Occasionally one finds a whole stretch with uniform chairs, but in many places the effects of piecemeal relaying and patching up over the years has resulted in a glorious mix-up, with different types on one sleeper: a fortunate thing that all types are constant in their sleeper to rail bottom thickness.

What freak of chance has given us a G. W. R. chair on the same sleeper as an L. & S. W. R. ? Small wonder that the unfortunate sleeper has split down the middle under the strain! North Western cheek by jowl with North Eastern: slide chairs of apparent mongrel origin: nearly new chairs and chairs deep rusted with age - what a mixture - enough to employ a curator of ancient chairs.

Our biggest curiosity is a small batch of Metropolitan and L.N.E. chairs. When one considers that this joint line is only about four miles long, built in 1925 as an electric railway extension, one wonders what over-ordering and subsequent adventures led to the surplus turning up in Clayton's siding. They are our biggest chairs, with a massive base and long bearing surface, designed for the pounding of heavy multiple unit stock.

Private manufacturers too are represented, including a large batch of chairs marked TWW. This is of course our good friends, 'Tommy' Ward's of Sheffield, who lay many private lines, and we believe carried out the Parkside-Middleton Pit relaying for the Coal Board.

We have to reject only a few chairs as too bad for re-use, and it would appear that our wide variety of chairs will be an attraction to the connoisseur for a long time to come. Will any member spotting a G. E. R. chair please tell our Chairman ? (He is rather lost without one at Middleton.)

#### Work programme.

After recent checks on the track at present in regular use the following schemes are suggested for work parties in the next few weeks. On the Clayton's curve (left-hand side going up) is one very bad rail-length, almost on its side, which has to be replaced before the loco or some loaded wagon puts it completely on its side. The rail has been getting progressively worse in the past couple of weeks. Regular re-keying sessions are also essential and can be carried out when there are only one or two members present. In order to store rolling stock we are also re-keying a short length of the main loop below Moor Road, one of Acme's sidings and the section leading across Burton Road. As present demands for traffic increase, so more storage space will be required.

#### Sheffield Farewell to Trams.

Saturday, 8th October, marked the last day of regular services in Sheffield of their now famous trams - only Blackpool now maintains and operates a working fleet. Society members were well represented on the last day and members will be pleased to learn that in the near future it is hoped that two of the last cars in service, a Dome Roof car and a Roberts car, may appear at Middleton. Their exact temporary home is, as yet, uncertain.

## Resignation.

We very much regret to record the resignation of the Society Secretary, Mr. Philip King, who has been so ably coping with the arduous duties since his inauguration as Secretary in May. We would like to take this opportunity of thanking Phil for all the many hours work he has put in on behalf of the Society, and hope that after his research course at the University has finished we will see him around again. Until the appointment of a new Secretary, all matters relating to the Society's administration etc. should be sent to Mr. Peter Dean, at present our assistant Secretary.

## Appointments.

Mr. Pete Dean has been appointed Signalling and Telegraph Officer responsible for future arrangements concerning telephones, signals, etc. and Mr. Mike Crew has been appointed Goods Agent, responsible for organising freight traffic on the line and keeping the necessary books in relation to this.

## New branch.

Messrs. Clayton's have expressed interest in a new branch, leading from our Moor Road/Balm Road line into their Moor End Works. Plans are being drawn up to consider the possibilities of laying such a line.



## Freight traffic.

As from 1st September, 1960, regular freight traffic recommenced on the Middleton Railway, operated by members of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society. The locomotive had been just returned from Hunslet, and after a few trial trips three empty wagons were delivered to Messrs. Robinson & Birdsell's works, adjoining King's and Clayton's. The same day one of these wagons was loaded, weighed and returned to Balm Road to await despatch by British Railways.

For the purpose, special freight wagon tickets were printed by our Chairman; one ticket is attached to the wagon when transferred from R. & B's. to B. R. and on this are entered the appropriate details, wagon number, date and destination (Hunslet East). The nett weight of the load is recorded in the driver's log book, together with details of numbers of wagons moved, time, wagon numbers and loco. miles. Each train is in the charge of driver, shunter and guard where possible, the guard brandishing a large red flag when crossing the Moor Road or Burton Road level crossings. Although considerable care is necessary over certain sections of track, a round trip is usually made in just under 30 minutes.

The Society has undertaken to operate a daily service (Sundays excepted) and does any required marshalling for the firms on the line free of charge. Normally two trains daily are run. One early in the morning collects empty wagons from British Railways and does any shunting that is required; a second, usually run in the late afternoon, transposes loaded wagons from Robinson & Birdsell's to British Railways at Balm Road. Collections and deliveries here are also made in the late afternoon and early morning.

At present the locomotive is locked in second gear. This means that the maximum load that can be pulled from rest without fiercely overheating the clutch is 7 empties from Balm Road, 1 or two up the 1 in 60 to Clayton's siding and 1 up the very severe 1 in 30 to one of the loading bays at R. & B's. Originally a number of loaded wagons were delivered to R. & B's. The contract with the firm concerned at Barlow, however, has terminated, so that only empties are at present brought up from Balm Road. Messrs R. & B's. are clearing their main loading bays and we hope to operate from these in the near future. Their loading capacity, and thus probably the amount of traffic, will then increase.

During the month services have, in fact, run nearly every day and no less than 40 or so wagons were taken in and subsequently returned to B.R., loaded. At the moment no less than 14 wagons have been in the bays at R. & B's., either being loaded or unloaded. One wagon is kept as spare. The total freight handled during the month has amounted to more than 400 tons! At the beginning of October, there were indications that traffic would be even greater during the month. Due to our present parking difficulties, wagons are put at the entrance to R. & B's, at the entrance to the siding of King's and in the Acme's siding.

Freight charges are  $1/2d$  per ton per journey (B.R to R. & B's or R. & B's to B.R.) and cost of fuel about  $1/10$  per gallon; however, the loco is fairly heavy on fuel and a ready supply has to be available. We hope to make regular services to King's and Clayton's as soon as we can; this will probably be after certain legal matters regarding the line are cleared up.

## 1697 History.

Following our purchase of locomotive number 1697, several details of its past career have come to light. Built in 1932, the locomotive was employed as Hunslet Works shunter until 8/1940 when it went to Capenhurst War Department as W.D. No. 27. It was subsequently returned to the L.M.S.R. in 6/1941 and numbered 7051. In August, 1944 it again returned to the War Department (possibly as W.D. 70027). After a brief sojourn here it was sent back to the L.M.S. in June, 1945. It was withdrawn from L.M.S. stock in December, 1945, sold back to Hunslet, and repaired. Subsequently, from October, 1949, until sometime in 1951 it was loaned to the Thameshaven Oil Wharf Ltd. Since then it has only been sent out on loan for odd short times: the Thameshaven loan being the only lengthy one.

## New members.

We welcome the following new members:

- |                        |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 92. David Moss         | 21, Gasholder Terrace, Leeds, 10 |
| 94. R. K. Walton       | 21, Park Grove, Bradford, 9.     |
| 95. Dr. R. C. Lawrence | 6, Wedgewood Grove, Leeds, 8.    |

## The Society.

Full details of the Society may be obtained from Dr. R. F. Youell Physics Dept., The University, Leeds, 2, while Mr. E. G. Cawthray, 1 Midland Terrace, Frizinghall, Bradford deals with all membership queries.

All notes and news for the next Old Run should be sent as soon as possible to Mike Crew, 131, Sandringham Drive, Moortown, Leeds, 17.

There will be a General Meeting of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society on Saturday November 26th. 1960 in the Physics Department of the University of Leeds at 2.30 pm. Full details of Agenda, etc., will be given in the next "Old Run".

Make a note of the date now!